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INTERVIEW WITH PETRUS MANOGO.

Dale McKinley (DM): Ok, if you could just give us your name, please?

Petrus Manogo (PM): My name is Petrus.

DM: Petrus and what is your last, your surname Petrus?

PM: Manogo.

DM: Ok Petrus. I think Emmanuel may have explained to you that we are having a conversation here. We basically want to talk to you just like a conversation, ja, about things in your life and the community mostly since 1994 ok. So just feel free to say anything that you want to say ok. I am just going to ask maybe some questions but then you can take them where you want them to go. Can you tell us how long has it been/how did you come to run this little shop here?

PM: 1992.

DM: Since 1992?

PM: Yes.

DM: Ok. And before that time what where you doing, before you were running this shop here?

PM: I was working in Nelspruit.

DM: So have you lived in this community since 1992 or were you born here and that is where your family is from?

PM: I was born here.

DM: Can you tell us what was it like when you were growing up in this community here under apartheid and those years here, can you tell us something about your childhood?

PM: During the apartheid period there were no jobs and the whites did not treat us (blacks) well. When they (whites) find you on the street without an identity document they punish you. Even at the work place they used to beat us.

DM: So when you were opening your shop in 1992 things were beginning to change at that point. How did you see, what did you expect in 1992 when the negotiations were happening between the ANC and the apartheid government? So we are

interested to know Emmanuel from Petrus when he opened his shop was he looking forward to big changes and things that were going to be better afterwards as a result of negotiations and possible changes?

PM: Yes, I thought things would change.

DM: What kind of changes were you expecting, what did you expect to be happening?

PM: I thought there was going to be jobs.

DM: So you are saying jobs but you are opening your own shop, so from this little shop did you expect that to be a better business opportunity, more money to be made, you know things like that?

PM: I wanted it to grow bigger and people to support it.

Emmanuel (interpreter): Did you see changes after 1994 even if you were already started with your spaza shop?

PM: Yes, I see changes because my business has more customers than before because they (people) got jobs and earn money.

DM: So has your business gotten better since then ... in the last 10 years?

PM: Yes, it's becoming better every time.

Ahmed Veriava (AV): Can I ask you a question, when you were working before you opened this shop, what job were you doing?

PM: I was working at the building contract.

AV: When you were building why did you leave that job to open a spaza?

PM: We were not paid well.

AV: Where were you working, were you working here in the former Transvaal, Pietersburg or in Johannesburg?

PM: Nelspruit.

AV: And was that the only job that you ever had?

PM: Yes, I worked there for six years.

Emmanuel: Did you manage within these six years to feed your family with that small amount you were getting?

PM: No, it wasn't easy to feed my family with that salary.

AV: Were you a contract labourer or were you fulltime, working there full time?

PM: It was a contract.

DM: What about your family? Do you have a family? Do you have children?

PM: Yes.

DM: How many children?

PM: Two.

DM: Two and how old are they?

PM: The first one was born in 1998 and the second one was born in 2000.

DM: So they are young children. Do you think they will get good schooling here in this community, education?

PM: No. They are not getting good education.

DM: Why does he think they are not getting good education?

PM: Because better education is in the urban areas.

DM: Is that because the school teachers are not good or because there is not enough text books ...what's the main problem?

PM: They don't get good education because sometimes teachers don't teach them.

Emmanuel: Services at school, things like a laboratory, library and so forth, which are available, are there enough for our children to get proper and enough education?

PM: No, there are not enough for our children.

Emmanuel: What is needed at school for our children to get a better life at school? What needs to be done?

PM: What can happen is to have computers and children to get taught in a better way.

Emmanuel: Because children differ with their talent, some are good in sports, so at the school is there any part which is taken where we can find our children participating in the PSL, some would be playing rugby, others soccer and tennis are these kinds of things available at school for our children?

PM: No. They are not available for them (children) to succeed.

DM: Let me ask a question. As a small business person you opened this shop in 1992. Have you received support from local government or from the Small Business Development Corporation or any of these institutions for your business?

PM: No. I don't get any support.

DM: So you do everything on your own?

PM: Yes, I do everything on my own.

AV: If I came to this place in, say in 1989, and I met you here and I asked you ... there is a struggle now and maybe in a couple of years they will release Mandela, what do you think it will be like to live in a South Africa in which Mandela is President, in which there is democracy and so forth? What could you've told me, in 1989 not what you will tell me now? What was it that you were hoping will happen?

PM: I thought things will start to go smoothly and we will be living in a democratic country where everyone is free.

AV: When you say you thought things will be good, what did you think would change? What are the things that would make the better?

PM: I thought that man (Mandela) because he is very a wise person when he comes out of prison he will push towards the changes.

DM: What kinds, lets ask in this community, what did you, besides education, you have mentioned education, what other things were you expecting to happen here besides education and jobs?

PM: At the side of service delivery if we can have development side where we can have access to more shops (complex) I think we can live better.

DM: When did this electricity come?

PM: 1994.

DM: Electricity 1994. And water?

PM: Even now we don't have water.

Emmanuel: As a young businessman what support are you expecting from the municipality for your business to grow up?

PM: I wish if they can lend us money so that we can expand our business buildings.

DM: Like a small business loan?

PM: Yes.

DM: Do you have information on how to go about getting that support?

PM: We don't have any information.

AV: Can I ask you a question. You know in the late 80s early 90s there were lots of people struggling all over the country toyi-toying and so forth, were you a part of any protests in this area? Were there protests in this area?

PM: Yes. I used to take part in those protests.

AV: During the elections how did you feel? I mean was it a moment of great excitement for you or was it just another day, 27 April?

PM: I was very excited when we were going to vote for Mandela.

AV: Why were you so excited?

PM: I was happy because Mandela was released from prison.

AV: Since 1994 have you toyi-toying again, have you been involved in any kind of protest since then?

PM: No. We never protested again.

DM: Ok I wanted to ask you, you had Mandela as president since 94 to 98, now from 98 to now we have president Mbeki, do you see any difference between those first four years and the last 6/7 years?

PM: I think there is difference because our children are getting grants from Mbeki so that they can live. And I also think that the jobs are available, people are working than before.

DM: Petrus as a small business man do you see things, do you think things have improved since president Mbeki came to power?

PM: We don't get support as small businesses.

AV: You know you have been speaking a lot about jobs and part of development is jobs. You as a small business owner, if today someone opened up a new mine and they say come and work for us, would you close your shop and go work a job rather or do you prefer working in your shop?

PM: No, I can't leave my business.

DM: If for example some of the businesses in Burgersfort or other places, like PEP stores, KFC all of them came here, they build right here and they opened all these shops, a shopping centre, don't you think that would put you out of business?

PM: I don't think my business will collapse.

DM: Why doesn't he think so?

PM: I will try and get different staff to sell.

AV: The biggest challenge for you in running this business, the big things that is the most work, what is that?

PM: I think the biggest thing is money; you work with the money everyday.

AV: Where do you buy stock for this shop? Where do you buy stock from?

PM: I buy my stock from Burgersfort.

AV: Burgersfort, and is it easy to bring all of the stuff from that side to here?

PM: It is easy and the important thing is transport.

DM: Do you think that, Petrus do you think that the prices of the things that you sell are too high for people here without money, no jobs and other things?

PM: I think it's very low for the people living here to afford.

AV: In this place what is it that you like most about living in this area?

PM: All that I like is people are working at the mines.

AV: When you were growing up, when you were a young man, when you were thinking about your future, what did you want to do when you grew up?

PM: I only thought of getting a job.

DM: What you have told us about so far is that things are ok, things have improved, but when we look around this community here, let say from someone who comes from Johannesburg, I see very little transportation; I see no water and sanitation, the school maybe not so good because of the text books and everything else. So what is it that you think needs to be done in this community for your business to get better because if the community is lifted then your business will be lifted?

PM: I wish if my place can grow bigger.

DM: Ja we understand that. What we are asking is what he thinks it is going to take to get to that point for the community and his shop because his shop can only grow if the community also grows?

PM: The biggest thing is for the people to get jobs.

DM: Where does he think those jobs are going to come from?

PM: It can be from the mines.

DM: How does Petrus see the mine that became Modikwe mine ... as a good thing or bad thing for the community?

PM: It is bad for the community.

DM: Why is it bad?

PM: They promised us tar roads, water and schools but nothing has ever happened.

DM: Petrus do you think that as someone who has toyi-toyied in the past, you have voted in the government, you were excited, you support the government but isn't it the government that is supposed to be building the roads, building schools, providing water not that private mine?

PM: These are supposed to be done by the mines.

DM: The question is what is the role of the local municipality here?

PM: There is nothing that the local municipality is doing here.

Emmanuel: Because there are RDP houses here, where do those people get those houses or is it because those houses are not enough?

PM: Those houses are not enough and many people still don't have them.

DM: There is something interesting that we are finding – it is not just Petrus here - its that many people that we are talking to they are saying no national government, the president its ok, they are doing good things, but the local municipality is doing nothing. So what do you think is wrong there because if the national is doing ok but the local is doing nothing but they are also joining the same political party, they are supposed to be doing the same thing? What needs to be done here at the local level?

PM: The best way is to elect new people who can be trusted and take care of the efficient running of our money.

DM: What does Petrus think of his local counsellor?

PM: Our counsellor is not doing anything for us.

DM: The local government elections were March 2006, so now we are one year, so is Petrus saying that in that one year the counsellor that the community elected is doing nothing?

PM: Yes, he has done nothing.

Emmanuel: In most cases the counsellors earn more than R10 000 and there are allowances that they get ... things like air time, car and houses. So what you are saying is that our government pays these counsellors for nothing?

PM: Yes. I think they get paid for nothing.

DM: Ok ...this is about democracy, local democracy. You have Modikwe mine, we have been told that Modikwe is making in every month over 100 million rand in profit. So if the mine is making 100 million rand a month profit but there is no paved roads in this community, there is no "metsi" (water), there is nothing. Isn't it the local government that should be using the taxes and other things to get that in the community? What does the community need to do to change things?

PM: The community should have representation in the Modikwa mine that can push for service delivery.

Emmanuel: I am one of the leaders in this community and we have gone several times to the mine but they never took us into consideration. And because we as leaders the mine does not want to listen ... What do you think the community needs to do to get attention?

PM: The community must elect other representatives.

DM: If you look in the future for the next 2/3 years/ 5 years, what does he see happening in this community for his business as well?

PM: I wish if there could be equality. People could get jobs and my business to grow up.

DM: Does he have a lot of, you know the word optimism ... Is he optimistic or does he see things in a good light or not so good?

PM: Things will be better in the next time.

DM: So do you think there is good future for your children?

PM: Yes.

DM: Is there anything that Petrus wants to tell us? This video and these recordings will be seen by quite a lot of people , not just in Johannesburg but maybe government and everything else. So is there something you want to say about the community, about your business, yourself ... that you want people to hear?

PM: About the community I think they should listen to our needs that we need infrastructure, buildings and water. If people can get jobs then I think my business will grow bigger and better.

DM: Thank you very much Petrus.

PM: Thank you.

